

BULLOCK COUNTY

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PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Provide programs and literature to parents to educate them on the importance of understanding and meeting the needs of their children at a young age in the prevention of health, and legal problems later in life.
2. Provide prenatal educational services to accompany existing prenatal health services provided to young mothers.
3. Encourage economic development

Issues

Issues are the primary concerns or problems facing children in the county.

Health - Children's (0 - 19) physical and mental well-being in the county.

Births to Teens

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Apply for grant(s) for educational support of pregnant teens.
- Provide pregnancy prevention information to students in grades 7-12
- Provide teen parents with information concerning support agencies

Promotion of Prenatal Care

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Provide educational services emphasizing the importance of prenatal care.
- Distribute information on local sources of prenatal care and services
- Participate in and support free public health screenings

Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Provide educational services identifying what constitutes child abuse and neglect
- Provide educational services concerning the causes of child abuse and neglect
- Establish a list of agencies and services available to help cope with or overcome common causes of child abuse and neglect and make this available to parents.

Safety - Children live free of abuse, neglect, crime, and drugs.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Promote public awareness of what constitutes child abuse and neglect
- Promote public awareness of the various causes of child abuse and neglect
- Distribute information concerning local sources of assistance for children and adults involved in abusive relationships

Provide a safer environment for children at school

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Work toward providing cameras on school buses
- Promote city, county, and school cooperation in providing security at schools during the school day and for after school activities
- Encourage educational employee training to promote security and safety of students at school

Encourage Adult Supervision of Children After School

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Encourage parents to work together to provide after school supervision of school age children in their neighborhoods
- Promote involvement of after school activities for children at school
- Work with the YMCA and other local recreation organizations to provide supervised after school activities for children

Education - Children learn the skills necessary to become productive citizens.

Increase the percentage of students graduating from high school

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Encourage after school tutoring for students who have not passed all parts of the Alabama High School Graduation Exam
- Work with the high school principal to provide community volunteers to tutor students after school in various subject areas
- Implement a mentoring program between seniors who are doing well in school and have passed the Alabama High School Graduation Exam and underclassmen who need help in those areas

Provision for High School Drop Outs and Struggling Students

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Promote counseling and support services from the community to students who are in the alternative school in addition to those provided by the school
- Encourage and support the local GED classes
- Provide opportunities for struggling students to visit technical schools, industries offering apprenticeship training, etc. to offer choices other than a traditional high school education

Provide a Variety of After School Enrichment Activities

Policy Action Steps:

- Encourage community volunteers to offer after school enrichment activities such as crafts, art, clubs, volunteer activities, etc.
- Provide support to extracurricular activities such as band, sports, cheerleading
- Challenge community leaders to get involved by giving of themselves to the children of the county by leading a small group of volunteers once a month working on community service projects such as picking up trash, planting flowers, helping the elderly, etc.

Early Care and Education - Children (0 – 5) are provided opportunities to fully develop emotionally, socially, physically, and cognitively and are ready to succeed.

Encourage preschool education

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Encourage education officials to search for funding of pre-school education
- Promote pre-school education to parents rather than day care as early as possible in a child's life
- Provide programs and literature for parents lauding the benefits of pre-school education for two, three, and four year olds

Educating Parents on the Importance of the Early Years to School Success

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Provide programs and literature for parents on the importance of reading to children in the early years
- Provide programs and literature for parents on the importance of meeting their child's emotional, social, and physical needs in the early years and how these things can affect their child's future
- Provide programs and literature for parents on guiding a child's behavior through positive encouragement and consistency so the child becomes self disciplined and motivated and therefore ready to learn

Educating New Parents

Policy Action Steps:

- Consult with doctors, hospitals, and the public health department to assure new parents are informed concerning proper care of newborns and warning signs of possible health problems
- Identify local lactation consultants and provide a list to expecting mothers to consult prior to making a decision concerning breast or bottle feeding
- Consult churches and other groups of volunteers who may provide rides for new mothers and babies to doctor appointments or health check ups and make a list available to doctors and clinics

Economic Security

- Children grow up in a financially stable home where the child's basic needs can be met.

Provide Career Awareness to Young People

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Compile a list of entry level jobs available in the county and distribute to all high school teachers
- Have top management of highly visible industry come into the schools and speak to students and parents about job skills most valuable to them when they hire new personnel (being on time, dependable, pleasant attitude, always willing to chip in when need, etc.).
- Encourage support for the annual Career Fair for high school students from local employers. This support will be for the mutual benefit of industry capitalizing on a local work force and providing jobs for local people

Encourage education and training for local business and industry

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Assess local business and industry needs
- Work with local business, industry, and educational organizations to provide needed training in local schools for local needs
- Encourage business and industry support of local education

Provide Summer Jobs for Local Youth

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Look for funding for local Summer Jobs Program through grant writing by the city, county or educational system
- Work with agencies in nearby towns to provide jobs for local youth

Parent Involvement and Skills - Parents and guardians participation and effectiveness in fostering an environment for children to become mature, responsible and independent adults.

Provide Support for Single Parent Families Regarding Child Care and Supervision

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Encourage neighborhoods to meet and form after school activities and supervision of neighborhood children of working parents
- Have speakers present ways for neighborhood adults to band together to provide a neighborhood watch, after school snack, or homework assistant so that children always have an adult nearby to call on if needed
- Assist local PTO's in providing helpful and interesting meeting during the school year that also educate parents and encourage parent cooperatives in providing quality care for children

Child Support

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Work through the schools to encourage whole families to be involved in the child's life (non custodial parent, older siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc)
- Encourage churches, PTO's, and other organizations in the community where young parents gather together to provide programs in which parents brainstorm ways of supporting each other in meeting the needs of their children
- Promote and educate teenagers through school, 4-H, leadership training, etc. about the responsibilities that accompany becoming a parent

Provide Experiences for Children to Interact with Positive Role Models in the Community

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Provide opportunities for children to work alongside positive role models during community wide activities such as the Chunnuggee Fair, Relay for Life, or the Career Fair
- Encourage community leaders to be involved with activities in the schools, the YMCA, 4-H, or recreational activities
- Encourage youth to become involved in helping bag food for the Bullock County Food Bank, visit nursing homes, pick-up trash along the streets, etc. through local clubs, church groups, or volunteer organizations. These groups are supervised by adult volunteers who demonstrate a belief in "giving back" to the community and provide good role models to youth

Policy Recommendation

1. Require parent education classes for parents receiving any type of public assistance and offer it to all new parents.
2. Provide pre-school education for all children ages 3 and 4.
3. Provide quality substance abuse prevention programs in the middle and high schools.
4. Offer an increased number of after school enrichment and recreational activities for school aged children.
5. Promote economic development for the county to provide secure jobs for families.
6. Promote training in school safety for all educational employees.
7. Provide parent education to in school teen parents to include health and safety issues, early education and behavior management issues, and child abuse and neglect issues.
8. Provide summer jobs for students.
9. Provide support and assistance to students needing to pass the Alabama High School Graduation Exam.
10. Offer job training opportunities to students who do not choose to pursue post high school education.